

THE AMERICAN LEGION

JOSEPH B. WESTNEDGE POST #36

NEWSLETTER 22 - 3, JULY - SEPT 2022

Post Commander: Don Gillespie

Sr. Vice Commander: Dennis Lutz

Adjutant: Steve Tolliver

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COMMANDER'S COLUMN – Our Mission

First, Thank you to our members who came to the elections and voted to allow to serve me as Commander of our post. And many thanks to Jim Saur, who has spent two decades serving our post to keep it active and growing.

As commander I have several goals. First, to be more active in the community. I agree with the statement “an active post is a growing post”. As Dennis describes in his column, we want to actively engage the youth in our community to help them better appreciate our Nation, it's veterans, and the value of service.

Also, I would like us to focus harder on taking care of our veterans. We have members who will soon be attending service officer training, which will help us to better assist our members and veterans. I would like to be able to help our members when they need minor, safety-related home repairs, such as a deck rail or step tightened, or a fence repaired. We have members who can drive a nail or turn a screw, so when one of our members has a safety concern, we can help them be safe or find them assistance.

We also need to recruit new members. I want Kalamazoo to know who we are and what our mission is! If we stay active, local veterans will see who we are, what our mission is, and why we continue to serve. Don Gillespie, Commander, Post 36.



Introducing your 2022 – 2023 Post 36 Officers

(L to R) Trustee Dan Bement, Sergeant-at-Arms Cordell Gardner, Adjutant Steve Tolliver, Trustee Jake Rickli, Commander Don Gillespie, First Vice Commander Dennis Lutz, Chaplain Stan Rop, Judge Advocate Jim Saur, Finance officer David Carvell, and Second Vice Commander Mike Sinclair.

Unfortunately, Trustee Clarence Worden is not in the photo.



“Thank you” to Harding’s Market on West Main,
for the candy they donated to us to hand out at the
Memorial Day and 4th of July parades.

“Thank You” to Blain’s Farm & Fleet in Portage,
for the US flags their customers donated, which we
handed out at the Memorial Day & 4th of July parades.

Americanism

I have spent the last two days at the American Legion Department of Michigan convention learning, and I have some ideas which I would like to share.

We need to develop better connections with American youth. It is nice and very appropriate when we participate in a parade as we did on Memorial Day, but while that is a good thing, it falls very short of the type of things we want to do as Legionnaires. We sponsor baseball teams. A good activity and very appropriate. We sometimes visit homes for senior citizens and do flag folding ceremonies. Good activities and very appropriate.

We are a post of 250 legionnaires on paper, yet we have less than 20 show up at our meetings or our events. This limits what we can do and what we set out to do. However, for our post to thrive, we should be doing more.

So, given the three pages of notes I have taken so far from the convention, I propose that one or two people step forward to help me as we create a plan that increases our reach to the youth of our community and is also within our ability to do. This means that at our July meeting, if you are interested, please see me or I will recruit people. I am thinking of things like proposing a flag folding example with narrative (like we did at the senior centers) for schools. But we need good ideas that are achievable by us. It would require us to reach out to teachers and schools, but if we did this at two or three schools in the course of a year, I would call that aspect a success.

We have other ceremonies that can be done without tens of people needed. We will brainstorm these and make a few recommendations. In the end, we want two or three programs or events that we can sustain, that we are capable of doing, and that we can get some measure of success around.

We also have a Sons of the American Legion squadron. In the coming months they will start to do programs (some of which may overlap). My wish is that we create a calendar of events so that they can be tracked, planned for, & supported for success.

We are now at the end of June and our schedule for July and August is filling up. We then have the twenty first anniversary of 9/11 in September. My hope is to have a plan that can be presented to the Post at our September meeting that will be a guidepost for the 2022 - 2023 year.

If we are successful, it will not only support one of the pillars that the American Legion is founded on but will also increase our visibility to the community and I believe our active membership for our Legion Post.

We are the Veterans who inspire youth, help other Veterans, and help our communities. Thank you all for what you do.

Dennis Lutz, Senior Vice Commander, Post 36.



Our float looked good as it carried members & family at the Kalamazoo, Comstock, and Schoolcraft parades.



Thank you to our members who walked the parade routes and handed out candy and flags to the many children.

The Wall that Heals in Battle Creek, July 14-17.

The Vietnam Veterans War Memorial Wall replica, The Wall that Heals, will be in Harper Creek from July 14 - 17. The exhibit features a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. The Wall That Heals has been displayed at nearly 600 communities since 1996. On July 12th, an estimated 1000 motorcycles are expected to escort The Wall that Heals from the Galesburg Augusta Primary School through Ft. Custer, to Harper Creek High's Soccer Complex.

We are visiting the wall several times. We are going to gather at the Harper Creek Legion Post 257 on Tuesday 7/12, by 2pm, to welcome the motorcycle escort as they arrive around 3pm. We will also be attending the Opening ceremonies at 10am on 7/14, and we have scheduled a group tour at 3pm on 7/14. And we have members volunteering during the exhibit.

If you are a Vietnam veteran and need a ride to visit the Wall, please contact us for a ride. You can join us as part of our group's visits, or we will find you a ride and the privacy for a personal visit.



Adjutant's Column- Looking Forward

I was recently elected to serve as the Post 36 Adjutant and look forward to what the elected officers can accomplish to improve the lives of veterans and their families. In order to assist those in our charge it is imperative that you have as much documentation for any condition you are filing for from the VA. Veterans (and their immediate family) can contact VETREC, which is an organization that retains all records of men and woman who have served in the military. They can be contacted at: <https://vetrecs.archives.gov/VeteranRequest/home.html> or mail request using **Standard Form 180** to: National Personnel Records Service (Military Personnel Records) 1 Archives Drive, St. Louis, MO 63138-1002.

Steve Tolliver, Adjutant, Post 36



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION SQUADRON 36.

Our application has been reviewed, and we expect to receive our Sons of The American Legion Squadron 36 charter from National very soon. (FINALLY) If you, or someone you know are interested in joining our S.A.L. squadron, please have them email our S.A.L. officers at salsq36@gmail.com. Annual dues are only \$10 for 2022/2023 and will increase to \$25 for 2024.

The S.A.L. mission is to strengthen the four pillars of The American Legion. Their campaigns will emphasize preserving American traditions and values, improving the quality of life for our nation's children, caring for veterans and their families, and teaching the fundamentals of good citizenship. S.A.L. members are males of all ages whose parents or grandparents served in the U.S. military and were eligible for American Legion membership. Meetings will be held the 4th Wednesday of the month, at 7pm. For more info., visit - www.legion.org/sons.

Welcome to our new members

James Grace - U.S. Army

Jeff Pierce - U.S. Air Force

Bobby Amos - U.S. Navy

Dean Freng - U.S. Army

Robert Byrd - U.S. Air Force

Robert Jacobs - U.S. Army

Welcome, and thank you for your service!

We hope you enjoy our newsletter & monthly updates. If you are not receiving our emails, please check your spam folder for Kalamazoo American Legion Post 36. Email saves us postage expenses. We will only send 1 or 2 emails per month, to keep you informed about activities & events.

PLEASE CONTACT US WITH YOUR CONCERNS-

Please feel free to contact your Post 36 officers with any issues and concerns about your safety, health, or benefits issues. You are important to us, and we can assist you and help with questions you may have concerning the VA Hospital, your veteran benefits, funerals, or we can make assisted living home visits if you just want to talk. If you have questions or concerns, please call one of your Post 36 officers from the top of the front page.



Early Bird Raffle: All members who renew their dues **BEFORE 11/11/2022 (Veterans Day)** will be entered into a raffle drawing with the winner receiving a free year of membership in the upcoming year (2024) Value is \$45. All Paid-up-for-Life members will automatically be entered in the drawing and will receive the cash equivalent of 1 year membership. Additional names will be drawn for prizes - by the American Legion Department of Michigan



TRIVIA- Thirty of the 45 presidents served in the US Army, 24 during time of war, two earned the rank of five-star general (Washington, who was promoted posthumously to a six-star general in 1976, and Eisenhower) and one earned the Medal of Honor (Theodore Roosevelt) Only one president (James Buchanan) served as an enlisted man in the military and did not go on to become an officer.



Russ Barr



Richard Glidden



John Wattles



Dale Wells



Ed Peters



Mike Topp

Never Forgotten. Rest in Peace.

TAPS- The members of Post 36
extend their deepest sympathies to the
families of these fallen members.

RUSSELL BARR was born on May 25, 1938, in Saginaw, MI. After graduating from Midland High, Russ joined the US Navy, serving on the USS Pomodon (SS-486) until 1959 and the Naval Reserve until 1963. Russ married Marsha Williams in 1959, and they had three children. After his first marriage ended, he married Julianne in 1975. In 1994, they opened J & R Coin and Jewelry. Russ was predeceased by his wife Julianne; his children Linda Roof and David Barr; and grandson Danny Waldron.

RICHARD GLIDDEN served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. He lived his entire life in Kalamazoo, working with Harding's Friendly Markets and Spartan Stores. He was an active member of the Shriners in which he served as a clown for many years. Dick was preceded in death by his loving wife Sally (Morell) Glidden who passed in January of 2001 and his companion of 20 years Peggy DeMink who passed in December of 2020.

JOHN (JACK) WATTLES was born in South Bend, IN on Jan. 6, 1931. He graduated from Howe Military School and WMU. In 1955 he married Helen Fischer. After serving in the US Army, they moved to Kalamazoo where Jack founded Arcadia Investment Management. In 2009 Helen passed after a brief illness. Jack married Marian Klein in 2011. Jack was predeceased by his daughter Sara Perry, and son-in-law Peter Barnes III.

DALE WELLS was born Oct. 23, 1930 in Three Rivers. He served his country for four years in the U.S. Air Force. In 1958, he married Bonnie Lee Peterson. Dale was an accountant, working with his three brothers in the family business, W.F. Wells & Sons, Inc. Dale was preceded in death by his wife Bonnie and son Steven. He is survived by his daughter Jeanne (Robert) Burke, son Greg Wells, and his granddaughter.

ED PETERS was born Dec 1926 in Jersey City, NJ. At 16 he joined the NY State Guard during World War II and guarded the Statue of Liberty. At 17 he joined the US Army, serving in the S. Pacific. He was on Okinawa when the war ended. Ed was called back to the Seabees in the Korean war. He attended ROTC at the University of Utah. In 1953 he was commissioned into the Utah State National Guard. He continued his career in the Air National Guard, retiring after 40 years. Ed is survived by his wife Colleen; their son & daughter; five granddaughters and 15 grandchildren.

MICHAEL TOPP was born March 5, 1949. After he graduated from Kal. Central in 1967 Mike joined the US Coast Guard. He married Barb and they had two children. Mike worked at Michigan Bell and retired from Ameritech in 1999. He then created Topp Builders where he worked until 2019. In 1983, Mike married Susan Froberg, who brought her two daughters into the family. Mike is survived by his wife Susan, his children and stepchildren, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

POST CALENDAR



- 1st & 3rd Fri. Trivia Night- 6:30pm. Fun and Prizes.
- 2nd & 4th Fri. Bike Night- 6:30pm. Burgers and brats.
- Mon. 7/4 Schoolcraft 4th of July parade. Walk or ride with us. Line up at 10am, starts at 11am. Ends with chicken and ribs at the Schoolcraft Legion. Call us for a ride.
- Sun. 7/10 3rd Dist. Meeting – Harper Creek Post 257. Lunch at noon, meeting at 1300.
- Tues. 7/12 2pm- Welcome the Wall that Heals escort. We will meet at Harper Creek Legion Post 257 by 2pm. Call us for a ride, or for more information.
- Thu-Sun. 7/14 – 17, The Vietnam Veterans War Memorial Wall Replica will be at Harper Creek High School Soccer Complex, 7290 B Dr. North. We are attending the opening ceremony at 10am and have a group tour at 3pm on Thurs. We also plan to volunteer as needed and pull guard duty.
- Thurs. 7/21 Legion Monthly Meeting – 7pm.
- Tues. 7/26 Veterans breakfast at LaRue's – 0830
- Wed. 7/27 S.A.L. Monthly Meeting – 7pm
- Thurs. 8/18 Legion Monthly Meeting – 7pm
- Fri. AUG. South Haven American Legion dinner night. No meeting. Family & friends welcome. Date TBD.
- Tues. 8/23 Veterans breakfast at LaRue's – 0830
- Wed. 8/24 S.A.L. Monthly Meeting – 7pm
- Sun. 9/11 Patriot Day Remembrance ceremony. Details TBD
- Sun. 9/11 3rd Dist. Meeting – Albion Post 55. Lunch at noon, meeting at 1300.
- Thurs. 9/15 Legion Monthly Meeting – 7pm
- Sat. 9/24 End of summer car and bike show. 1130 – 1600 car and bike show with prizes. Bring your old ride/rod.
- Tues. 9/27 Veterans breakfast at LaRue's – 0830
- Wed. 9/28 S.A.L. Monthly Meeting – 7pm
- Fri. 11/11 Veterans Day meal/ceremony. Details TBD.
- Sat. 12/10 Army/Navy game! This is fun every year.

Monthly Veteran's Breakfast

Join us at LaRue's Family Restaurant 6375 Stadium Dr, for our veteran's breakfast. We meet on the 4th Tuesday of every month, at 0830am. Bring a friend. ALL veterans are welcome. It's an opportunity for local veterans, family, and friends to sit, socialize, compare notes & give each other a hard time. When the kitchen re-opens, we hope to begin serving breakfast there!!

FYI- LaRue's does not take credit cards.

Update on the Red Arrow Post Fire and Repairs

Last fall we had an electrical fire in the kitchen. The fire damage was substantial, but it was contained to the kitchen and banquet room. The VFW leadership quickly ensured the post canteen and meeting room was open and in operation. Thank you!

The banquet room and roof repairs are now complete, and the kitchen should be open in late August. If you need a rental hall for a graduation party, reception, or any other event, please consider renting our hall. It is clean, convenient, and very affordable. And members get a discount on top of the already low rate. **Please stop in - your business helps support the post.**

VETERAN ASSISTANCE -Beyond the Basics

Q: Are there VA benefits that I may not know about?

Aid and Attendance: Veterans may be eligible to receive money to cover the cost of nursing homes, assisted living programs and other long-term care options. Couples may receive up to \$25,000 and surviving spouses up to \$13,560 a year to cover their long-term care costs.

Burial benefits: A U.S. flag may be requested to drape over a veteran's casket and families may request a Presidential Memorial Certificate to honor the deceased loved one's service. VA also provides a free headstone or grave marker.

GI Bill: The GI Bill offers up to \$2,000 to help cover the cost of certification courses or vocational training programs. This benefit works well for veterans who wish to pursue a career path that does not require a college degree. Unused credits through the GI Bill may be transferred to spouses and dependents of veterans, although there are service limits required to transfer the benefits.

Life insurance: Veterans may receive up to \$400,000 in life insurance through Veterans' Group Life Ins. program, at competitive premium rates.

Housing assistance: Veterans having trouble making their mortgage payments are eligible for repayment assistance through the VA. Options for help include special repayment plans, loan forbearance and loan modification programs. Additional benefits are available for homeless veterans and veterans with VA loans.

The Four Pillars of the American Legion

1. Strong National Security
2. Taking Care of Veterans
3. Mentoring Youth
4. Patriotism and Honor (Americanism)



THE RED ARROW CLUB – (269)349-7218

American Legion Post 36 meetings are usually held every 3rd Thursday from 7-8pm in the Red Arrow VFW located at 1920 E. Kilgore Service Rd., Portage